GENERAL NOTES

A possible case of polymorphism in the Lead-colored Bush-tit.—An adult male specimen of *Psaltriparus minimus* (Yale Peabody Mus. no. 7882) was collected by David H. Parsons 12 miles west of Cortez, Montezuma County, Colorado, on July 31, 1953, well within the range of *P. m. plumbeus* but with a typical plumage for that subspecies. Instead of having the usual brown cheeks and nuchal collar, it possessed black cheeks and collar. Otherwise the plumage was typical of an adult *plumbeus*. It probably was not a hybrid nor a stray from the range of the Black-cheeked Bush-tit (*P. melanotis lloydi*), as bush-tits are rather sedentary and the specimen in question was found over 300 miles from the range of *lloydi* or any other subspecies of *P. minimus*. At the time of collection, the specimen was established by Parsons to be an adult male. Subsequent examination of the skull confirmed this age determination, thus eliminating the possibility that the unusual black plumage was a manifestation of immaturity. The specimen's wing, tail and culmen were measured (50.0, 55.0 and 7.0 mm. respectively) and found not to be significantly smaller than the average of 38 other male *plumbeus* skins. Also, no other adult individuals of the Lead-colored Bush-tit with similar aberrant melanism have been reported; therefore it would seem that this specimen does not represent a discrete population.

Swarth (1914. *Auk*, 31:499–526) has advanced the theory that melanism in *Psaltriparus* is an old trait. Black coloration is to be found in the more southern bush-tits which are presumed to be older than the northern, brown-headed subspecies, due to the effects of glaciation upon the regions that the latter bush-tits now inhabit. *P. m. plumbeus* is thought to be the link between the northern and southern species because of the geographical position of its range and the occurrence of black head feathers in its juveniles. Therefore, the specimen under consideration would appear to demonstrate polymorphism in *plumbeus* by exhibiting an ancient color trait that has been suppressed through evolution but that has cropped up again in this adult bird.—Mary Anne Heimerdinger, *Conservation Program, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 15, 1954.*

Black-billed Cuckoo feeds on Monarch Butterfly.— During the fall migration of 1954 I saw more cuckoos, both Black-billed (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*) and Yellow-billed (*C. americanus*) than I have ever seen before. These birds were seen on frequent trips to parts of New Jersey and Long Island, New York, areas in which I go birding regularly. In the latter part of September and the first two weeks of October, the cuckoos were quite numerous at Cape May Point, New Jersey. They were seen on the roads, in the hedges and on the porches around the Point and were not at all as secretive as they are at other times of the year. Monarch butterflies also were migrating and were quite plentiful at this time.

On October 9, 1954, while walking with my wife on one of the roads at Cape May Point, we watched as a Black-billed Cuckoo flew overhead and landed in a nearby cedar. As we were looking at it the cuckoo suddenly sallied forth and, with quite an audible snap of its mandibles, captured a passing monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). It flew back into the cedar with its prey. In the tree, the cuckoo held the monarch by its thorax and shifted it about in its bill, apparently applying pressure to this area. At that time, positive identification of the monarch was made with the aid of 10-power glasses. Then, very deftly, almost faster than the action could be seen, the cuckoo began to swallow the monarch, body first. The cuckoo held its bill straight upward while half of the monarch's wings protruded from its cavernous mouth. The bird was not successful in its first at-